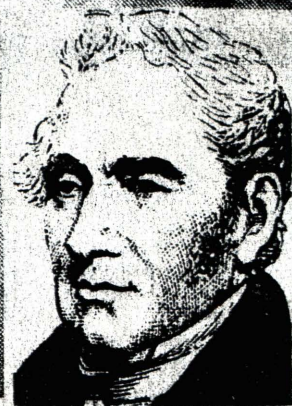


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Carole-Rnne Stephenson

George Stephenson

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LEAD-IN.

Funny sort of a year. 1984, that is. Nothing much seemed to happen at all. Low points were lack of coal trains to spot, Boy George, York dinosaur exhibition, few megalith spotting expeditions, C.E.G.B. nuclear flask vandalism of 46009 to prove nothing whatsoever, all dogs, BMX bikers on pavements, absence of Nicki Debus, earth mysteries magazines' decline, John Lowe losing to Crafty Cockney, Tony Benn, Ethiopia, Paul Weller, hangovers, publicity for Roylaty, postmen, Tam Dalyell, halfpenny's demise, Scargill, hedgehog-flavoured crisps, I.O.J., "The Sullivans" and Polydor Records.

High points were naming of more H.S.T. power cars, The Kane Gang, ploughman's lunches, Bruce Springsteen, "What's Brewing", Pat Benatar, sausage and onion-flavoured crisps, Hurricane Higgins, "Private Eye", Berwick's Tweedview Hotel, new technology at the Hartlepool Mail, Page 3, music fanzines' explosion, Edinburgh, building a pond in the garden, Tetley's Bitter, Seething Wells and Attila the Stockbroker, video recording, TV showing of "Pat Garret and Billy the Kid" and Caroline Munro in "Starcraze", kestrels hovering, Linda Lusardi, Darlington's Glittering Star, "Dallas", Axa, cycling, great crested newts and collecting frogspawn, Yorkshire Ranger tickets and the naked summer dancers of Tamworth.

Of which I have a little information to impart. You may recall their midsummer naked ritual cavorting in Hopwas Woods, Staff., was a silly season stunner for the tabloids. Sixteen members of Ordo Argenteum Astrum -- ten men and six women -- leaped around a fire at midnight and a suspicious farmer reported "strange goings on." As the DAILY EXPRESS cheerfully summed up in its "Hallowe'en Week Special -- The Witch Report": "Trouble was, they were as high as witches on broomsticks from cannabis and wound up in court."

Jim Lees of the Order wrote to me to say: "I was reading in QUICKSILVER HERITAGE of your conviction that astrology was born in Albion. This fact is borne out by the zodiac following the climatic and agricultural habits of these islands. The U.K. is governed by Aries -- the beginning of the zodiac -- quite literally all things begin and end here.

"Our attention was drawn to leys via the deciphering of a book by A. Crowley. He claimed that it was dictated to him by an angel, in 1904. Our researches revealed that it produced a new order of the English alphabet that when applied to his book "The Book of the Law" revealed a system of ritual based on astrology and leys. The task in hand now is to either prove or disprove this hypothesis. We are fortunate in that most of the planets are placed in the S.W. quadrant and the sun conjuncts Jupiter on December 14, 1983. At this time several lodges of this Order will attempt to invoke the earth forces to regenerate Albion using the ankh as a primary symbol. The circle used by this lodge is Arbor Low. The opportunity to awaken this power will not occur with such strength for many hundreds of years." So it wasn't just an excuse for getting high and ogling at nakedness!

.....

FROM GEORGE STEPHENSON TO CAROLE-ANNE STEPHENSON

(CHANGING LOCOMOTIVE NUMBERS AND NAMES)

by PAUL SCREETON

Was 47216 born under a bad sign? It could be argued that one of the most extraordinary symbolic events performed during the 1980s was the non-arbitrary renumbering of "jinxed" diesel electric locomotive 47216 by British Rail.

It is not every day that one witnesses such a monolithic institution as being a seeming source of what would appear almost to be the performance of a numerological magical ritual upon one of its apparently cursed locomotives. Yet for no "logical" reason was 47216 to receive a new identity as 47299 in late 1981. Renumberings only occur normally if a locomotive has received a major modification which necessitates a number change so the TOPS computer can identify its new sub-classification for allocating it duties commensurate with its re-equipped capabilities.

Perhaps only the "Great Train Robbery" locomotive, D326 -- becoming 40126 under the TOPS renumbering -- has had the journalistic jinx tag applied more often and with greater reason (but that's another story). While 40126 was condemned for scrap in mid-1984, the mishap-prone hapless 47299 at the same time received authorization for two new cabs after its latest escapade. Not just little boys -- and their dads -- play at trains, but just as youngsters stage-manage model train pile-ups, it seems some ethereal gods sport with British Rail, seeking currently to add 47299 to their Valhalla of motive power.

It is difficult to track down the source of urban belief tales, but it would seem that there was sufficient concern and willingness to alleviate the "predictions of impending doom" (1) surrounding 47216 for officialdom to eccentrically -- or otherwise -- approve the renumbering to 47299 in 1981. Another version claims the renumbering occurred "after a soothsayer predicted a crash involving it in its earlier guise, 47216". (2).

The most complete version of the legend which was to mystify the trainspotting fraternity appeared in a national newspaper on April Fool's Day. However, the story was no joke. In all seriousness a clairvoyant was reported as having seen in her mind's eye a big blue locomotive hauling oil tankers heading for a crash which would involve a fatality. The writer related that "so vivid was her picture that the clairvoyant could even decipher the number of the freight engine -- 47216." (3).

Two years later, and as 47299, on December 9, 1983, whilst hauling a 900-ton oil train that very locomotive collided head-on with a Cleethorpes to Sheffield two-car diesel multiple unit at Wraby Junction, Barnetby, near Scuntorpe, Lincolnshire. Student Rachel Taylor (19), died and five others were seriously injured, the d.m.u. was severely damaged, and both cabs of 47299 stove in.

As with all urban belief tales validity is sketchy and the clairvoyant remains anonymous. "In a telephone call to British Rail she insisted her name be kept secret before she described the accident in minute detail." (3).

However, the renumbering is in no dispute, and though far-fetched to some extent, it would seem there is no other explanation than superstition that it occurred.

Source for the major media article on the subject was railway enthusiast Howard Johnston (32), of Sawtry, near Huntingdon. Cambs., who on seeing in December, 1981, B.R. had renumbered 47216 for no apparent reason, telephoned its home depot -- Immingham -- for an explanation.

He said: "I was astonished when they told me 47216 had been renumbered because of a clairvoyant's prediction. They said they had been warned of an accident and gave me precise details. They were determined to play safe and made a special application to B.R. H.Q. in London to change the number. I read about the crash at Wraby junction in my newspaper, but it was not until a friend rang to tell me that it was 47299 that the incredible story pieced together."

An authority figure normally appears in an urban belief tale, to add credence, if needed, and a spokesman for B.R. when confirming to the journalist the history of the locomotive, put forward the police in this role.

"It seems the change of number made no difference to the prediction," he said. "The clairvoyant was known to the police and it was decided to take her at her word. We decided that it would be better not to tempt fate."

I last saw 47216/47299 a couple of years ago -- again hauling an oil train or tanker empties -- at Sheffield Midland station. It belongs to a series of the 500-plus generally undistinguished but reliable 47xxx series jacks of all trades which can be seen on various freight or passenger workings and include a number named to revere early former Great Western Railway locomotives. Their names include ODIN and THOR, but even this gods-fearing factor has failed to lift the seeming curse on their fellow machine. Others are named after counties, rivers, universities, a steelworks, associations with Scotland and Geordieland, and various personalities.

In fact, the subject of locomotive namings is an interesting example of giving special individuality to sub-animate objects. A seemingly innocuous subject, but locomotive naming has aroused a furore recently among ferroequinologists (students of the iron horse), who were not previously known to be political; they accepted the Battle of Britain class "spamcans" named after World War II squadrons, bases, and air chiefs; Royal Scot class regiments; and the diesel-hydraulics named after warships. The first generation of Warships was sunk by their non-standard hydraulic transmission and so an unimaginative B.R. transferred fleet names to its new prestigious class 50s. So far so good. Then Rail Enthusiast magazine echoed sentiments of pacifism in its letters column decrying the "warmongering" choices of names which had been attached for several years. The response seems to have been sparked off by the application of additional plaques to locomotives bearing names of ships involved in the Falklands contretemps.

The motive for naming locomotives after regiments, air squadrons, or warships is unclear. Several classes have been described in railway literature as "the locomotives which won the war", generally applied to the authors' favourite class or company it seems. I preferred to see the magnificent Deltics with racehorse names rather than the representatives carrying regiment names. Far more suitable. Deltics were certainly not designed to haul troop trains.

Now at great expense, B.R., in a mood of weirdness even stranger than 47216's renumbering, has renamed one of the aforementioned 50s Warships. HERCULES has become SIR EDWARD ELGAR. The engine has been repainted from regulation blue to green. The Western Region had plenty of class 47s it could have named without denaming a locomotive. Spurious arguments have been aired as to defending this action such as adding "variety" to the 50s, no actual ship Hercules remaining anyway, and the bunfight -- sorry, ceremony -- was suggested as costing £20,000 and this has not been denied.

That saviour of the nation's sanity, THE SUN, -- that jingoistic organ which pulled us through the darkest hour against the appalling odds of the Argies -- where were you in the great locomotive-naming debate? Why no "20 Things You Didn't Know About Engine Naming Ceremonies"? Well, here's my humble choice for a complete renaming of the class 50s. I feel that as girls bared their chests for The Sun camaremen as the Task Force proudly sailed for the South Atlantic, we should salute a selection of Page 3 favourites from the past decade. Instead of a ship's crest above the nameplate how about a metal topless replica to give a thrill to the the general public and give an added incentive to the trainspotters who take nameplate rubbings with wallpaper reel ends (the juvenile version of brass rubbings of departed knights on tombs in old churches). This liberal policy if put into action could make the expression "pulling a train" take on a whole new meaning (i.e. normally referring to a girl willingly having multiple intercourse, usually in a Hell's Angels situation)! So we would be going from that pioneer of the formative railway age George Stephenson to the delightful gradients of the nubile Page 3 modeller Carole-Anne Stephenson.

CLASS 50

ENGLISH -- ELECTRIC TYPE 4

CO -- 60

Built: 1967-68 Weight: 117 t Brake Force: 59 t
 Engine: E.E. 16CVST of 2010 kW (2700 hp) at 850 rpm.
 Traction motors: Six E.E. 538/5A axle hung Wheel dia.: 1092 mm (3' 7")
 Max. T.E. 216 kN (48500 lbf) Power at rail: 1540 kW (2070 hp)
 Cont. T.E.: 147 kN (33000 lbf) at 23.5 mph. Max speed: 95 mph.
 TTH index: 61 MW: orange square RA6 All xe.
 Formerly numbered 401-449, 400.

50001 Jilly Johnzon	50026 Diane Lowe
50002 Nina Carter	50027 Carole Needham
50003 Stephanie Marrian	50028 Karen Kelly
50004 Rita Pennington	50029 Nike Clark
50005 Karen Richardson	50030 Janine James
50006 Tessa Hewitt	50031 Claudia Martin
50007 Helen Ferguson	50032 Sue Simmonds
50008 Carol Dwyer	50033 Christine Stone
50009 Denise Perry	50034 Davina Laurie
50010 Kerry Lou Bayliss	50035 Janine Andrews
50011 Sheree Boyland	50036 Angie Layne
50012 Denise Denny	50037 Joanne Latham
50013 Anne West	50038 Helle Kjaer
50014 Nicki Debuse	50039 Erica Preston
50015 Lorraine Paul	50040 Carole-Anne Stephenson
50016 Debbie Boyland	50041 Karen Clarke
50017 Jane Warner	50042 Corrinne Russell
50018 Kim Mills	50043 Tracy Dixon
50019 Debbie Smith	50044 Linda Lusardi
50020 Susie Watkins	50045 Gillian de Turville
50021 Penny Barnatt	50046 Samantha Fox
50022 Sian Adey-Jones	50047 Suzanne Mizzi
50023 Jackie Jones	50048 Debee Ashby
50024 Minette McFarlane	50049 Tracy Neve
50025 Caroline Christensen	50050 Beoley Ashley

This article happens to be adapted from one which appeared in The Symbol, stimulated by a piece by its editor Nigel Pennick on bell-lore and naming such functional objects. He chose to delete my list of 50 girls' names, which as editor is his prerogative. A few days after his noble organ appeared, Railway World hit the bookstands and with surprising synchronicity dealt in a casual way with class 50 names. Its noted article and photographic contributor Derek Cross had died at the age of 54 on May 31, 1984. The editor's admirable appreciation of Cross's work and personality included the following: "Many railway enthusiasts are apt to take themselves and their hobby too seriously, but Derek was never to be accused of that. He once sent me a list of the class 50s (at the time they were being given their warship identities) named after all the things in modern society that he hated most. It was convincing enough to be taken seriously." (5)

But just to give the reader a literary cold shower and shift to another track and box clever -- the real names of those class 47s I began with -- 47484 is ISAMBARD KINGDOM BRUNEL. There has long been a legend that Freemason Laughing Sam had the sun shine through his Box Tunnel on his birthday on April 9. The conclusion reached in the columns of the Railway Magazine 20 years ago was that although Brunel and his surveyors attempted to achieve this symbolic exploit, they were inadequately proficient at determining atmospheric refraction. As a result, the sun supposedly shines through on dates ranging from April 6 to April 8 -- but not on April 9. (6). Yet according to Philip Atkins, librarian at the National Railway Museum, York, gangers on the Bath to Chippenham line have reported the occurrence as late as April 17. To attempt to align track in such a non-functional way must be the epitome of personal symbolism. (7).

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- (1) RAIL ENTHUSIAST, Feb. 1984.
- (2) RAIL ENTHUSIAST, March, 1984.
- (3) Bell, Graham, "Fates Rides the 5-32", THE SUNDAY EXPRESS, April 1, 1984.
- (4) Screeton, Paul, "Railway Rites -- The Renumbering of 47216", THE SYMBOL, No. 4, 1984.
- (5) Harris, Michael, "Derek Cross : an appreciation", RAILWAY WORLD, August, 1984.
- (6) DAILY TELEGRAPH, March 16, 1984.
- (7) DAILY TELEGRAPH, Feb. 27, 1984.
- (8) RAIL ENTHUSIAST, Feb., 1985.

P.S. To quote: "Jinxed class 47 47299 meanwhile is back in traffic after its collision repairs, noticeable because the new cabs are two inches higher than the rest of the bodyside lower profile, and the buffer beam lacks the usual raised edge." (8).

THE WIZARD OF STANLEY (Part 2)

by PAUL SCREETON

Visits to Stanley would include a sampling of the wine for the astrological month. The bottles were kept in the chest from which Tom viewed the fireball. As well as wine-making, the Coles made muesli, a mixture which is an acquired taste where the initial cost may seem high but works out ridiculously cheap in the long run. It had just been introduced in commercial packaged forms as Alpen.

There were also rows of herbs in bottles on shelves, a particular interest of Sharon's. She offered a titbit of mycological advice one day when we were taking Avalon across the golf links at Seaton Carew for the dog to have a crazy run on the beach; a treat which sent it into ecstasies. Sharon found a mushroom and observed that the effect of any mushroom would echo its immediate environment. One from a lush pasture would be wholesome, whereas its cousin from a derelict bomb site would make you feel as if the Luftwaffe were bombing the walls of your sanity.

ROCK ON TOMMY

Tom's interests were wide, ranging from pop music (identifying with the title character in The Who's rock opera "Tommy" and referring to Mich Jagger, evading tax in France, as "the king in exile"), through the visionary writing of William Blake, theorising on the whereabouts of the allegedly still sleeping King Arthur and secret hiding place of the bones of Saint Cuthbert, to a cautious fascination with cults (when it was known it was his birthday at Findhorn, he was asked in the chapel to choose a hymn in celebration and he selected "All Things Bright and Beautiful" as the only one he could recall).

Tom lived each day as it came. He occasionally painted signs for the likes of farmers and delivered groceries from Durham City to outlying areas a couple of days a week, and this gave him the financial security to spend the remaining time on personal projects. He had abandoned full-time employment in 1966 with the reclassification of nature to the "zodiac rule" as his main task. He had served his time as an aeronautical engineer, but had not wish to return to this. He applied for the job of Northumberland footpaths officer, which would have been just up his street. Never idle, yet never hasty, Tom's way of life followed a spontaneous path.

As far as his personal history went it was largely erased for my benefit. He claimed gypsy roots for himself and tinker heredity for his wife. He did have a gaily-coloured traditional gypsy caravan at the back of the house and told me his taking it to Appleby fair behind his Land-Rover caused some raised eyebrows among traditional tracelling folk.

He shunned much of the commercial world yet carried a chequebook and his evasively mysterious smokescreen on his past rolled away somewhat the day he got out his scrapbook of personal cuttings. There was the story about ~~how he protested~~ how he protested about the planned felling of a tree by sitting in it, which faintly conjures up the shamanistic motif of the World Tree and the magician among its boughs. There was also another cutting about him barricading himself in his house, though I cannot recall the circumstances.

There was also an account of his terrestrial zodiac discovery from his local newspaper. (Following this a car outside his home was allegedly vandalised and Tom believed it was in retribution for his revealing the whereabouts of the cathedral in earth. However, the attackers did not have the psychic power to realize the car was not Tom's or even known to him.). Though he hardly gave the impression of wanting to court publicity, he did write two articles for "The Ley Hunter". But pride of place went to an old Sunday newspaper piece with picture of himself and friends being deported from one of the Channel Islands. They looked like beatniks and this had outraged the sensibilities of the cultured natives of whatever island it was.

THE GRIM REAPER

It was while sleeping rough in the Channel Islands that Tom experienced the phenomenon which is generally seen as a major aspect of shamanistic initiation. He and his friends were sheltering in a World War II concrete defensive bunker. In the darkness Tom noted a light which raced towards him from the sky with blinding brilliance.

He held this experience in high regard. Later, of course, was to come the zodiac-message fireball. Subsequently my wife and I when being taken home one night by the Coles all watched for about half-an-hour a huge globe of light bobbing above the south works of British Steel's Hartlepool plant as we drove from the Durham plateau to the coast. It is easy to dismiss this latter sighting as a reflection of some steel process on low-lying clouds, but others have seen weird phenomena over the mills, including a group captain of my acquaintance who in all his Royal Air Force days had never seen a craft like it. In these days I was keenly interested in ufology and could not understand why Tom was decisive in not reading any ufological import into any of these occurrences. Incidentally, when we arrived home that night we found the fuses in the house had blown in our absence, and so in one respect we were definitely not in the light.

As for UFOs, there has been some speculation linking these and out-of-the-body encounters. Tom claimed he had visited all the planets in the solar system by astral travel and found them to be nothing like resembling astronomers' predictions. He also insisted he had travelled in his astral "egg" to torment a vicar for whom he delivered groceries. Another tale regarding a clergyman was of a Roman Catholic priest who was found "hobbled with a broken ankle; also the victim of spontaneous human combustion.

To digress a mement regarding this case of someone living near Tom. "Fortean Times" editor Bob Rickard had someone check newspapers for this case and as I recall found some evidence but a differing date. Spontaneous Human combustion is still a vexed question yet regarded as well-attested by many worthy researchers and non-proven superstition by its detractors. Shamanism incorporates mystery of fire as a key constituent and during sessions sorcerers swallow live coals, walk upon fire and touch red-hot iron. These acts demonstrate the practitioner's spiritual condition literally for a spirit is stated in their ideology to enjoy incombusibility. A resolution of the enigma of S.H.C. may lie in the direction of the victim voluntarily or involuntarily meeting an ordeal by fire on the psychic plane and their failure resulting in the subsequent conflagration.

The shaman's gift for healing and extra sensory perception join in the occasion one Sunday when I had felt ill all day and was laid on the settee when Tom arrived with a friend. They had been up ladders all day painting and it had been very windy. His friend actually looked worse than I felt, but Tom said he felt they had to come. By the time they left an hour or so later I felt on top of the world. Tom also claimed once he cured a boy's asthma by placing him on a specific stone at the Derbyshire henge monument Arbor Low.

On another occasion this walking contradiction may even have saved my life. He once told me a curious tale of seeing Father Time in full regalia in broad daylight in his guise of the Grim Reaper. Later that day he struck a bird and upon stopping found it to be dead. Upon driving on he narrowly avoided a fatal smash himself and concluded the sighting of the Grim Reaper and the bird's death, which he formulated to have been a sacrifice on his behalf, were part of a cosmic scheme and lesson.

This particular tale surfaced in my mind as I was cycling between Sedgfield and Wynyard, in County Durham. I was at a particularly narrow part of the road when a

small car overtook a large lorry at speed. The car pulled right out to me side of the road, causing me to swerve on to the verge and into the hedge. Upon disentangling myself and uprighting the bicycle, I noticed a sparrow lying by the roadside. One wing was missing, it was bleeding and stunned, so I crushed the body as quickly and humanely as I could. The part Tom's tale played in the event must remain inponderable. Did some "guardian angel" process select it to resurface in my mind at that instant as a warning signal? Was it ~~gall~~ a lesson that these "coincidences" occur and are meaningful? Even, could the tale have been an invention of Tom's, knowing prophetically that it would one day have substance for me?

What is even ~~stranger~~ stranger is the fact that a chillingly similar incident occurs in "Miracle Visitors", by Ian Watson. This, incidentally, is the most thought-provoking and intellectually absorbing fictional book on the flying saucer enigma.

One of the key characters, Michael, is cycling at a point where he always freewheels at speed, but is stopped by two strangers and bundled into their car. From inside one man points to where Michael would have reached, travelling very fast, when suddenly a petrol tanker takes the bend in the opposite direction, hitting the far verge, skidding out of control, overturning and exploding. That's how the alien describes it and Michael believes it. Until, that is, the tanker heads up the hill past them with its driver looking as if he's seen a ghost. Nevertheless, Michael has been saved by two Men in Black parked in this antiquated yet seemingly brand new car.

To me this fictional reflection of a personal event made the book especially intriguing. As a means of recommending the book, I'll digress here a short while and stress its relevance to those interested in the paranormal and ask what all this has to do with earth mysteries.

Not simply that the character Michael learns about "ley lines" and is led to plant biosensors as ley/UFO linkage. It is because this aspect must be considered in the context that virtually all elements of the UFO mystery are meshed with considerable skill into the narrative. Ufology is a reef around reality, encrusted with coral mythology of ancient archetypes forever taking on new form, but retaining a base and building forever to keep out all but the shrewdest investigator and ready to deceive and ensnare the unwary and unworthy. Watson has a clear grasp of the complexity of ufology and comes closest to forwarding an answer through the character Deacon, who says: "UFOs can't yield to our science, because they're part of a higher psychic pattern" and "....the Saucer people -- who are only us, of course, part of our collective psychic life."

Watson's book may be science fiction but its intellectual astringency is so effective and stimulating that it makes most serious non-fiction ufology writers seem like banal charlatans and slimy psychotics, rewriting one another's books ad nauseum and nauseatingly being patronising to one another as they plagiarise so vilely that each "new" work's only shock effect is one of terminal déjà vu.

Watson expresses much of the UFO mythos in terms of psychosociological interaction and this, I believe is the most promising route to a solution. With an abductee in the recent Aveley case talking about ley information being given by aliens, it now seems timely for this tenuous ley/UFO link to be appraised. Is it all a coincidence? Or like the accidents involving Tom, myself and Watson's ley activator, Michael, are we dealing with a psychical survival system stretching from the individual to the Gaian life-form's nervous network and on to cosmic consciousness?

THE EXPERIENCE OF DEATH

The primary goal of the shaman is the experience of death and Tom Cole claimed he came through this ordeal.

As noted, Tom felt there was something significant about the St George and the Dragon effigy on the wall of Hart's St Mary Magdalen Church. After we had been there a second time to see it and have a drink in the White Hart public house, Tom went home and began an attempt to learn what, if anything, was significant at Hart. From mulling over white hart myths, to meditation also to no avail, and magical practices, Tom came to the conclusion there was either a very well kept secret at Hart, or none at all.

He then resolved to take a drastic course. He would "enter the underworld", as he domain

previously unexplored. After several days of venturing he returned and told me he felt little benefit apart from the experience of death.

Tom said his body stank of death. His hair was like electricity. His skin itched, perhaps from a "death mite". His breath was horrible.

So after a shower he headed for a particular hill, not even feeling hungry.

One other positive aspect, however, emerged. He believed St George's lance was pointing to something of importance. At the time the area immediately below the Hart effigy was railed off and overgrown with red roses. Tom surmised someone of stature could have been buried there. The railings have now gone, the roses are pruned and I was told that a previous incumbent had been laid to rest beneath the dragon-slayer.

Hart does have claims to fame, for here Robert the Bruce of spider fame was born, as was Derby winner Voltigeur, and by the main street stands a glacial erratic of Whin Sill granite which could well be a markstone in the ley system. It occasionally gives off a voltage ranging from pins and needles sensation to an unpleasant electric shock.

Maybe Hart remained elusive but at least it led Tom to the experience of death. Certainly he managed an extraordinary act of weather manipulation, the authenticity of which I can vouch for, but feel it unwise to enlarge upon. There are many other aspects of his teaching and personal affairs which are not for public consumption. I considered telling the whole story in its full fantastic form and protecting Tom under the cloak of anonymity, but I have always felt that pseudonyms lack authenticity and devalue any statement. I feel it important that there ~~should~~ be public recognition of the fact that there are people like Tom with shamanistic gifts among us and that each of us can develop toward these, better ourselves and improve the lot of humanity. Tom widened my horizons, made me think for myself and maybe saved my life.

Tom was an enigmatic and charismatic character, a mixture of guru and trickster, man of myths, magic and mystery. This is his story: at least partially. A portrait at least.

The last I heard he was down Glastonbury way.

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ANCIENT SKILLS AND WISDOM REVIEW SECTION --- BOOKS AND MAGAZINES REVIEWED

"HERE BE DRAGONS" by RALPH WHITLOCK (Allen & Unwin, £8-95)

"THE LAMBTON WORM AND OTHER NORTHUMBRIAN DRAGON LEGENDS" by PAUL SCRETON
 (available from the author -- address page 1 -- for £3, inc. postage)

Cartographers in the olden days when left with a blank space with no place names to use would advise "here be dragons" and hope no inquisitive navigator would return with a traveller's tale to dispell the myth.

Yet far from being at the mercies of the map-making trade or confined to exotic lands, dragons have been attributed to more mundane locations. The Chinese are far from having a dragon monopoly and Britain is one of the richest countries for the folklorist specialising in the tracking down the wheres and wherfores of dragonlore.

We are lucky in that Ralph Whitlock has written an admirably inclusionistic book, with every avenue of dragonology explored from Neolithic serpent worship to flying saucers and Velikovskian comets; allegorical Christianity overcoming paganism to many other cultures; the dragon's place in natural history and means of outwitting the beasts.

He covers artifacts, documents, crests and armorial bearings, landscape figures, and ancient customs and their revival. These aspects put the dragon in context and then a lengthy 190-entry gazetteer lists where dragons allegedly appeared or where monuments to them have existed; from prehistoric barrows and stones named after dragons, through the Norse mythology Tree of Life carvings to elaborate allegorical depictions in various forms in churches.

There are plenty of photographs of sites described and many more line illustrations plus national map pinpointing the gazetteer locations.

However, I have strong reservations about Whitlock's devoting so much space to carved figures in churches of dragons or other fabulous beasts. These could have been deleted from the gazetteer section and been simply mentioned in the introductory chapters. However, by doing so he would have greatly reduced the seemingly spectacular total of British dragons. In fact, greater research would probably achieve a total of around 300 or more without recourse to carvings.

My book on Northern dragons can add to Whitlock's total. Indeed after publishing my book I found a well-documented legend associated with Conisborough, near Doncaster, written up in "Northern Earth Mysteries" articles by Ted Armstrong. One other Yorkshire one I missed, but is included by Whitlock, is that of Billy Biter and the dragon of Filey. Also that of Sexhow, given by Whitlock, gave me difficulties in identifying its origin and relevance (was the skin at Hutton Rudby or Stokesley?). A vast number more depictions in Yorkshire churches are extant than Whitlock gives, as any reader of N. Pevsner's architectural works can ascertain.

As for the Sockburn Worm, the ceremony performed when a newly-elected Bishop of Durham crosses the Tees did not die in 1826. In 1884 the controversial Professor Jenkins took part. The Grey stone is in a field and not the churchyard. The manor house may well not be demolished. Certainly five years ago it was run by two dragons of women using it as a dalmation rescue centre!

On the reservations about the book front, he also rather overdoes the hobby horse mumming-play aspect (a personal hobby horse?) -- important though this pagan survival seems. This again allows for the total to be increased, with dubious evidence for strict dragon relevance.

Nevertheless, it pleased me that Whitlock and I agree that the so-called Offington White Horse warrants consideration as a dragon and also that despite archaeologists' doubts, antiquarian William Stukeley was probably right in identifying a coiled serpent in the meandering megaliths at Avebury.

On a more political level I endorse his usage of pre-1971 county boundaries for England and Scotland, as these are arbitrary administrative arrangements having nothing to do with "real" geomantic apportioning of land and its true value.

In fact, The motif of the hero gaining land for ridding the district of a dragon is one of the fundamental aspects of the serpent story. The many intricate weaves in the rich tapestry of dragonlore are well-handled by Whitlock, who consistently draws comparisons between aspects of different stories. He also is at pains to link cases of geographical propinquity where it seems versions have become confused or have a common origin.

The book is invaluable to the serious folklorist. So, I suggest, is also my own work on the subject. One kind reviewer of Whitlock's work even urged readers to seek out my own work in preference as a regional study of in-depth archival research.

I was, of course, limited to legends from Yorkshire, Cleveland, County Durham, and Northumberland, but covered these in great detail. My research led to lengthy accounts of each separate legend plus discussion of the nature of the dragon from possible prehistoric leftover to psychological archetype. Many, many hours were spent in libraries throughout three counties getting at the rare source material and writing up. The book was produced by Tony and Jan Roberts (Zodiac House) who gave it a marvellous layout and presentation with old illustrations and large size flexiback format. A dozen or so copies of the original run remain and can be purchased directly from me.

THE EVIDENCE FOR ALIEN ABDUCTIONS by JOHN RIMMER; THE EVIDENCE FOR UFOs by HILARY EVANS; THE EVIDENCE FOR VISIONS OF THE VIRGIN MARY by KEVIN McCLURE; THE EVIDENCE FOR BIGFOOT AND OTHER MAN-BEASTS by JANET & COLIN BORD (Aquarian Press with ASSAP, £2-50 each)

The most impressive aspect of the first four books in what is to be a rolling programme of books whose authors have been given the brief to take a balanced view of subjects remaining on the fringe of science is that they have been written sensibly by sensible people. It is all too easy to sensationalize any subject which can be loosely dubbed anomalous phenomena and this series, to quote the publisher "aims to provide up-to-date, impartial and comprehensive assessments of the evidence for a particular phenomenon." The various authors have obviously been selected because of their known track record as writers and researchers, particularly in this case the Bords, whose "Alien Animals" and "Bigfoot File" made them an obvious choice. Strangely to the public no doubt (though not so, perhaps, to those who know them) is their being the only ones to decline ending with a personal overview of their subject.

Two of these books focus on flying saucers. Series editor Hilary Evans has the unenviable task of condensing a multitude of UFO theories in his book and does so admirably within the constraints. He covers a large number of cases histories in abbreviated form and then analyses the evidence. It is, of course, a hard task but allows the reader to choose which avenues may be the most fertile for further personal investigation. Having seen in broad daylight close to an object which gave every impression of being a solid disc of non-Earth technology manufacture and handled by an intelligence I applaud Evans' last paragraph conclusion he has no other answer than to suppose certain sightings are of alien origin.

Naturally he covers just about all the other possibilities -- particularly socio-psychological ones, including Space Age hopes, folklore, science fiction and B.V.M. visions in this context. These, of course, are the subject of McClure's investigation into Marian apparitions and their implications. He admits his "evidence" is weak and this -- through no fault of his own -- is the least interesting book. Maybe it is just anecdotal but I have heard he had received some strange religious experience himself.

John Rimmer's book, however, was one I read with great interest. His healthy scepticism I condone, and his editing Magonia has given him the grounding not to too easily endorse such emperor's new clothes as the birth trauma hypothesis. It is tightly written and erudite in its connecting the white slave trade abduction rumour and in particular Edgar Morin's Orleans study. Hearteningly he ignores Frank Johnson's "The Janos People" but does not give John Michell recognition for ~~being~~ being the first to link the fairy tradition and UFOs. However, and I really must emphasize this, appreciating the concertina discipline applied to the material, that the shamanistic chosen one aspect is woefully underplayed. It may not be the card to win the game but this is an ace thrown away.

The Bords are equally enthusiastic, but they are also true professionals. They provide informative references and leave it to the reader very much to decide. In a way I admire them for not being tempted to give personal pontifications. However, I just would not be able to resist it in the same situation.

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"IMPRISONED IN PARADISE" (THE CEPU POEMS) and "TALES FROM FIERY MOUNTAINS" by CHRIS ASHTON (FLASH FLOOD PRESS). (£1-50 from author c/o EEP, Jalan Kapten Tendean, 18, Jakarta Selatan, Indonesia).

This is a picaresque bunch of booklets overflowing with zest for life (often low life), drunkenness, whoremongering, violence, painful massage, nasty insects and a full evocation of the mysterious East.

There's a vivid sequence of "Red Indian Princess" poems about a full-blooded Oriental girl trying to Westernize her looks, yet contemptuous of the poet's VD Russian roulette fears and his insistence on his contraceptive deterrent for his personalized Cruise missile.

The second book has poems with a different pace. Some read like Bob Dylan's early sleeve notes and "Fiery Mountain Song" reminded me of "Hard Rain's A Gonna Fall."

Chris spent three months in Indonesia -- where he's returned -- and the poems are a record of the impact that country and culture had on his Western perceptions. All true stories, he says, and the picture of the topless women he sent me assures me must have enjoyed himself!

STOP PRESS: "Lost in The Mist" and "The Return to the Chamber of Horrors" is Chris's latest set of poems. Much is expressions of discontent at the people and outlook of Britain in 1984. No wonder he's got out again. Same price, same address.

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MAGAZINES MAGAZINES MAGAZINES

MAGONIA. An editorial dismissive of FLYING SAUCER REVIEW as being any longer a serious UFO publication crowns MAGONIA as now being the claimant to that throne, as a serious and independent journal. However, you need good eyesight to read 15. No. 15. The French are now a respected and formidable force in ufology, unafraid of embracing new concepts and opening up new horizons. Jacques Scorneaux here gives an overview of French thought on the use of the psych-sociological hypothesis. Another Frenchman, Thierry Pinvidic, gives his opinions of Chinese attention to UFOs and a book on the subject devoted to China. Peter Rogerson -- always a stimulating writer -- assesses the changes in his own perception of the UFO experience and despite the title, "It's All in the Mind" he emphasizes this is not so. Plus intelligent letters column and incisive book reviews. No. 16. "Myth" of ufology theme in contributions from Hilary Evans, Peter Rogerson and Ian Cresswell. No. 17 is to examine the current position of the extraterrestrial theory in ufological thought. Sub £2 for 4 issues; U.S. 5 dollars. Cheques or money orders to be made payable to John Rimmer. Address 64 Alric Avenue, New Malden, Surrey, KT3 4JW.

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THE SYMBOL. Flagship of the Pennick publishing empire expires. No. 5. Worth seeking a copy for Robert Anton Wilson's thoughts on "Holy Blood, Holy Grail". Also fly agaric and Old Mother Redcap, Green Man, and 23 and 33ology. No. 6. R.I.P. Reprint of Prudence Jones' "Eight and Nine" Norse sacred number thesis. The Sawards feature interesting foundation sacrifice material. Plus fylfor (swastika); reason for Libran dove; Jews in Canterbury. P.S. My "puritan pagan" tag was tongue-in-cheek. The "I?!" should have made this obvious. Full list of material available from Nigel at 142 Pheasant Rise, Bar Hill, Cambridge.

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STONEHENGE VIEWPOINT. Magazine on newsprint dealing with archaeology, astronomy, geology and related arts and sciences. No. 62. Dragon theme issue. Editor Donald Cyr's on "the Trail of the Dragon's Eye" is a reprint of earlier material S.V. with updated material. Dragon Eye lines at Silbury and Overton Hill are covered and there is a useful assessment of current literature on dragonlore. There's also his trip to St Ann's Head and conversations with J.G. Williams and Prof. R.J.C. Atkinson. The archive piece by Isaac N. Vail (a great influence on Cyr) covers the serpent and dragon in canopy system analysis. Plus speculative piece on possible Wiltshire observatory; an archaeologist on Stonehenge; John G. Williams on his SCEMB line system of aligned prehistoric only sites and high incidence of solar angles; deciphering the County Durham Seaton amulet; ancient measuring units; King Arthur. There is also a comprehensive book order service with controversial items a speciality. Sub 10 dollars for 14 issues U.S. From 2821 De La Vina Street, Santa Barbara, Calif., 93105, U.S.A. U.K. agent is L.C. Smith, 16 Solstic Rise, Amesbury, Wilts., SP4 7NQ.

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PENDRAGON. Journal of the Pendragon Society. Covers multiplicity of Arthurian themes in a lively, varied and well laid out magazine. Vol XVI, No. 2. Penceffyl edition. Jeremy Harte contributes one of his fascinating folklore articles -- now becoming ubiquitous -- here on Badbury Rings; a contender as Mons Badonicus. The late Sam Brewster's history of Britain in the 5th century continues.

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There's P.K. Johnstone's reprint from S.V. of one of his Riothamus writings and on a more frivolous note a "war correspondent's" dispatches on a mock battle fought in Leicestershire. There's plenty of wide-ranging debate and comment in the lengthy readers' letters section, including "Holy Blood" and Badon; the latter topic also referred to in points made by the late Desmond Hoskins. Miscellaneous items appear in the "Noticeboard" and "Old News" -- a deliberate misnomer; and there are mentions of periodicals with Chris Lovegrove giving extended mentions to other mags containing articles on the Matter of Britain. Vol. XVI, Nos. 3/4. First part of this double issue deals with the ambiguous and controversial figure of Elen/Helen/St Helen. Editor Chris Lovegrove sets the scene with an overall perspective and there are interesting articles and letters on the subject. The volume 4 part focuses on "gravestones" in pot-pourri fashion. Sub £3 for 4 issues; 9 dollars U.S.; and includes Society membership. Correspondence to The Secretary, 27 Roslyn Road, Redland, Bristol, BS6 6NJ.

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